

106 East Morgan Street, Suite 207 Brevard, NC 28712 828.884.3205 planning.transylvaniacounty.org

Transylvania County Transportation Advisory Board
November 12, 2025 at 2:00 PM
106 E. Morgan St.
Large DSS Conference Room, 2nd Floor
Brevard, NC 28712
Teams Call Link

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

- I. WELCOME
- II. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS
- III. CONSENT AGENDA
 - A. Minutes (August 13, 2025)
- IV. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
 - A. Election of Chair and Vice Chair
- V. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. FY25 Transylvania County Transportation Operational Statistics
 - i. Summary of Demand Response
 - ii. Fixed Route Summary
 - B. Fixed Route Rerouting Update
 - i. County Manager Update
 - C. Land of Sky RPO

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Micro-Transit 101
 - i. Review of Micro-transit operations in the state and beyond
- VII. PUBLIC COMMENT (15-minute time limit. Speakers are limited to three minutes.)
- VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-

join/19%3ameeting_MGVmYmQ3OTktNGM2Ni00ZmI4LWFmMmUtMTAwOTY1MDFkM2Fi%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2274421f34-7ed7-4ffd-996e-

03f6db8a2da7%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22aa4f3af0-f270-4faa-a1b6-0a4e2d58770e%22%7d



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Transylvania County Transportation Advisory Board August 13, 2025 at 2:00 PM 106 E. Morgan St. Large DSS Conference Room, 2nd Floor Teams Call Link

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

- WELCOME: Amy Freeman, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. Present at the meeting were Greta Gosnell, Jeff Adams, Jamie Green, Abby Incze, Libby Fisher, Carla Hill and Vicki Eastland.
- II. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS: Jeff Adams made a motion to table the Election of Chair and Vice Chair until the next meeting, seconded by Freeman and passed unanimously.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes (May 14, 2-25)
 - <u>Freeman motioned to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Incze. The motion passed unanimously.</u>
- B. Transportation Updates from Staff
 - i. Planner Resignation & Replacement Status

Staff have opened the application phase for the open planning position to replace Ms. Terrell, received over a dozen applications and interviews will take place in September with hopes of filling the position as soon as possible.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

A. Election of Chair and Vice Chair Tabled until the next meeting.

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. FY25 Transylvania County Transportation Operational Statistics
 - a. Summary of Demand Response
 - b. Fixed Route Summary

Staff provided the latest statistics, showing a slight increase over last year's demand response numbers, while fixed route service continues to fall in the number of riders.

- B. Fixed Route Rerouting
 - Review & Recommendation
 Staff summarized the staff report, explaining the history of the TAB's deliberations surrounding modifications to the fixed route service, in hopes of

raising awareness and ridership. Staff emphasized that a number of surveys have been conducted to find out current riders and non-riders perceptions of the TIMs service. As the survey findings show, most are aware of the various services, yet most don't utilize the services for reasons, largely concerning that they already have transportation and the inconveniences that surround either fixed-routes or calling ahead for demand response. The TAB voiced their support for ceasing the fixed-route operations, in favor of providing more resources to the demand response. The biggest concern remains the loss of same-day service, yet Ms. Eastland spoke of micro-transit as an option for Transylvania County. Ms. Freeman emphasized marketing and education, regardless, and if the County stops fixed-route service, they should consider micro-transit and other alternatives for the future.

Upon a motion by Mr. Adams, to cease fixed-route operations and amended to include the condition that the county will explore micro-transit operations as a same-day alternative, and seconded by Ms. Fisher, the Transylvania

Transportation Advisory Board unanimously approves a recommendation to cease fixed-route services as currently operating, with the condition to explore micro-transit services.

C. Land of Sky - RPO

Ms. Eastland Board of Transportation approved the new STIP. Transylvania TAC is meeting to consider and recommend prioritization. There are a number of bike-pedestrian projects included and funding for the Turkey Pen park-and-ride. FY27 UGA will require a 5310 project update and support letter. Micro-transit exploration could be funded through IMD. NCDOT Comprehensive Community Plan Updates for a five-year plan. The state stopped doing so and Transylvania hasn't had a plan in over a dozen years. Ms. Freeman requested a Micro-transit overview at next meeting.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Unified Grant Application for FY27
 - i. 5311 Administrative Application
 - ii. Combined Capital Application
 - iii. 5310 Operating Application

Staff presented the FY27 numbers, which will go before the Board of Commissioners. Operations and Administrative costs have stayed within 10% over the past few years and there will be no vans purchased under combined-capital for the FY27 cycle.

Upon a motion by Ms. Freeman, seconded by Ms. Hill, the TAB voted unanimously to approve the FY27 UGA budget.

- VII. PUBLIC COMMENT (15-minute time limit. Speakers are limited to three minutes.)
- VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

<u>Upon a motion by Ms. Freeman, seconded by Ms. Fisher, the TAB voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 2:47PM.</u>

planning@transylvaniacounty.org



106 East Morgan Street Suite 207 Brevard, NC 28712 828-884-3205

Transportation Advisory Board

Staff Report: Fixed-Route Re-Routing Update

Agenda Date: November 12, 2025 **Prepared By**: Jeff Adams

Agenda Item: V-B

Background

The Fixed Route service began in 2021 after receiving expansion funding from the State/Federal Government through our annual grant process. Despite operating for nearly four years, it has yet to exceed 250 riders per month, resulting in a daily ridership of 10 or fewer riders. The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) has been exploring ways to increase ridership.

In 2023, the Board considered changing the stops based on staff suggestions. The primary issue identified was the community's lack of awareness about the service. Although efforts were made to improve advertising, the absence of physical stop signs at most locations remains a significant problem. During the initial roll-out of the fixed-route service, many businesses or property owners were reluctant to have signs installed on their property and thus, only a few are posted. The Board has also expressed interest in adding transit shelters at the stops. Both drivers and TAB members participated in a survey to suggest improvements for the Fixed Route service.

In 2024, staff proposed three route change options to TAB. The Board requested a public survey to gather more input from the community and riders. The initial survey received only 32 responses. After reviewing the results, the Board directed staff to create a shorter survey, which was then advertised through a newspaper story and staff presentations to community groups.

As the TAB weighed changes to the Fixed-Route system, they also noted the importance of the fixed-route van to regional transportation, as it is currently the only 'same day service' option available to Transylvania County citizens and visitors. The TAB has continued to voice concerns over the lack of public knowledge of the system and yet TIMs has spent over \$3,500 in FY25, doubling the FY24 advertising total of \$1,473, which totaled more than the previous three-year's expenditure combined. In other words, although marketing of TIMS has continued to increase over the past three years, the ridership numbers have not responded in the same manner, falling from 2,402 in FY23 to 1,948 in FY24 and just 1,780 in FY25.

Considering the shrinking ridership of the Fixed Route service and the increasing demand for the Demand Response service, the Transportation Advisory Board recommends that the Board of County Commissioners consider suspending Fixed Route operations, in preference of adding to the Demand Response operations. The TAB also recommends exploring Micro-Transit service options, as many North Carolina transit agencies have implemented. The TAB also asked staff to continue to explore extended and expanded operations, such as longer hours, weekend operations and daily transfer trips to Buncombe, the Asheville Airport and Hendersonville.

Staff have sent the TAB recommendations to administration for the next available Board of Commissioners agenda. The County Managers memo to the Planning Board has been attached.

Jeffrey Adams

From: Jaime Laughter

Sent: Thursday, October 16, 2025 1:35 PM

To: Greg Cochran; Rick Lasater; Bramley Fisher; Herschel Johnson; Mike Privette;

jmccall10141986@gmail.com; wwnj1223@hotmail.com

Cc: Trisha Hogan; Jeffrey Adams **Subject:** County Manager Update

Good afternoon,

I want to update you on a couple of administrative changes to our Planning and Transit work plans that I am planning and how that impacts work we are doing with the Planning Board.

Our Transportation Advisory Board is recommending that Commissioners stop the fixed route transit service. At the same time, our planning position that is intended to specialize in transportation is vacant. Recent discussions with the department has raised questions about the role of the position and whether the current job description captures the needs of the department in balancing transit operations and long range planning. I am going to be recommending to the commissioners that we have a transit operations study conducted before we hire that position and before making a change to the fixed route system so that we can identify how we can best meet the needs of our community within the resources that we have available. This does extend the period with reduced staffing in the short term, but should give us valuable information about how to make sure our operations are performing at our highest level long term.

With the vacant position on hold and having another planning position out on medical leave, I am concerned that we are not far enough along in the plan document preparation to have a quality document prepared, reviewed and modified by you in time to take a recommendation from you to the Commissioners before the current 2025 Comprehensive Plan expires at the end of this calendar year. Community plans reflect our organization professionally, but more importantly, represent our citizens and this special place we all call home. Trying to rush to meet the end of the year would only sell our organization and our community short.

To chart a path forward, I am going to recommend that commissioners adopt a resolution formally extending the 2025 Comprehensive Plan to 2027. The planning horizon originally used for the 2025 plan was very short compared to the 20-30 year projection typically seen so I am confident that the plan remains a valid representation of our community through the extended time frame. This will allow me to work with Jeff and his staff to build in more quality control steps so that we can facilitate a plan that your board and our commissioners will be proud to endorse and bridge to a time where staffing levels are more conducive to completing the plan.

I want you to know that I do not take proposing delays lightly, but it became very clear to me Monday night at the Commissioner meeting how important it is to get this plan right. You worked hard with Ashley Minery and the TPMA consultants on the Housing Plan and produced a document rich with data that will help our community better understand the complexity of the housing concerns while also providing critical information on possible solutions that our community can collectively pursue. By taking more time and these steps with commissioners, I believe that our staff will be able to work with you to provide the same quality deliverable in the Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you for all you do in service to our community!

Jaime

Jaime Laughter, AICP, ICMA-CM

County Manager Transylvania County

planning@transylvaniacounty.org



106 East Morgan Street Suite 207 Brevard, NC 28712 828-884-3205

Transportation Advisory Board

Staff Report: Micro-Transit 101

Agenda Date: November 12, 2025 Prepared By: Jeff Adams

Agenda Item: VI-A

"A" Exhibits - Attached Materials

- A-1 NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division's On-Demand Microtransit Annual Report (October 2023);
- A-2 Public Microtransit Pilots in the State of North Carolina: Operational Characteristics, Costs, and Lessons Learned, Bardaka, et al, NC State University, Institute of Transportation Research and Education, 2023;

Background

In 2023 NC State University researchers at the Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) produced a report, Public Microtransit Pilots in the State of North Carolina: Operational Characteristics, Costs, and Lessons Learned.

The study's Executive Summary states:

"Microtransit is an emerging public transportation mode, and guidance for planning and implementation is currently lacking. Our study presents the experience of the public agencies in North Carolina that have implemented microtransit systems and seeks to contribute to an improved understanding of microtransit costs, advantages, and current challenges. We conducted semi-structured interviews with public agency representatives, reviewed the contracts between public agencies and the service providers, and examined the operational characteristics related to the service to gather adequate information about the planning and operational challenges of this new mode as well as the lessons learned from the NC implementations. All the transit agencies we studied operate the microtransit services in some form of partnership with private entities, collaborating either for software, vehicles, or for the overall operation of the service itself. We identify three different models of microtransit service delivery and the main purposes for which microtransit projects are implemented. We discuss existing challenges related to funding availability, meeting the demand under cost constraints, ADA compliance, banking and technology related barriers, virtual stops and access to vehicles, driver shortage and training, and data ownership. We also present the lessons learned from the NC microtransit implementations, including the implications of service delivery model selection, service provider selection, and marketing. The findings of this study and the lessons learned from the NC experience will assist planning and transportation agencies to plan and design successful microtransit systems."

The study's 'Lessons Learned' section says that "The first insight captured from our interviews is that microtransit is one of the best possible ways to provide transit access in areas with low population density and in small service areas. The interviewees generally agreed that microtransit is valuable because it can increase community mobility and uncover latent demand, meaning trips that would have been taken if a convenient, affordable transportation option were available." One key finding of the study is that feasibility studies are highly encouraged to determine the most appropriate transit solution for the specific jurisdiction. In fact, adequate planning appears to be one of the keys to a sustainable system.

As the study concludes, "microtransit as an emerging mobility option has the potential to be highly effective in specific locations. So successful, in fact, that some relatively new microtransit systems are exploring how to meet the increasing demand."

On-Demand Microtransit Annual Report

October 2023





Glossary

Accessible: Able to be reached or connected to another mode of transportation from an existing mode of transportation or an individual property. Vehicles that do not restrict access, are usable, and provide allocated space and/or priority seating for individuals who use wheelchairs, and which are accessible using lifts or ramps.

Blended Model: Separate contracts for software, drivers, or vehicles with different entities.

Demand Response (DR): A transit mode comprised of passenger cars, vans or small buses operating in response to calls from passengers or their agents to the transit operator, who then dispatches a vehicle to pick up the passengers and transport them to their destinations.

Equitable: Fair and impartial use or access of transportation service without bias towards specific parties or groups. Equitable outcomes in transportation include:

- Minimization of transportation barriers and unmet needs
- Multimodal options that rival driving in terms of time, convenience, and cost
- Zero transportation-related fatalities or injuries
- Zero transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions

Fixed Route: Services provided on a repetitive, fixed schedule basis along a specific route with vehicles stopping to pick up and deliver passengers to specific locations; each fixed route trip serves the same origins and destinations, such as rail and bus; unlike demand responsive and vanpool services.

On-Demand Microtransit: On-demand microtransit is an emerging service option for public transit agencies utilizing an on-demand transportation solution that is flexible and responsive to the real-time needs of transit riders.

On-demand microtransit is similar to private rideshare services, allowing riders to book and pay for trips online, whether using personal computers or personal mobile devices connected to the internet. Riders are typically picked up at their preferred origin and taken to their preferred destination (curb-to-curb service). The ability to use transit for spontaneous trips similar to driving is fundamental to providing equitable mobility.

Operational Characteristics: The context in which transportation modes operate, including speed limits, safety conditions, or operating hours.

Software as a Service (SaaS): A service model where a transportation system provides microtransit services by purchasing software from a third-party. Third-party platforms typically include dynamic vehicle routing capacity, passenger aggregation, rider and driver apps, among other features. The agency directly provides drivers, vehicles, and operations management.

Temporal: Of or relating to time as distinguished from space.

Transportation as a Service (TaaS): A service model where a transportation system contracts with a microtransit vendor to provide a turnkey solution that includes both microtransit technology/software and drivers, vehicles, operations, and marketing.

Transportation Disadvantaged Populations:

Demographic groups more likely to experience difficulty accessing transportation. Several demographic groups typically regarded as Transportation Disadvantaged include:

- Low-income populations
- Elderly (65 or older) populations
- Racial/ethnic minorities
- Disabled populations
- Limited English Proficiency populations
- Carless populations

Transportation Network Companies: Companies that utilize online platforms to connect passengers with drivers and automate reservations, payments, and customer feedback. Riders can choose from a variety of service classes, including drivers who use personal, non-commercial, vehicles; traditional taxicabs dispatched via the providers' apps, and premium services with professional livery drivers and vehicles.

Unbanked Riders: Transportation system riders who do not use or do not have access to a banking account and must use cash in the process of fare payment.

On-Demand Microtransit Annual Report 2023





By the Numbers

Systems providing microtransit service

Residents served 240K

Zero-vehicle households reached 5,200

WHAT IS ON-DEMAND MICROTRANSIT?

A technology-enabled, public transportation system with flexible routing based on real-time trip demand and origin-destination patterns



Models









Software as a Service (SaaS)

Provides the software and the transit agency provides the drivers, vehicles, and operations management.

Blended Model

Separate contracts for software, drivers or vehicles with different entities.

Transportation as a Service (TaaS)/ Turnkey

Provides the drivers, vehicles, software, and operations management as a turnkey solution on behalf of the transit agency.

Why Microtransit?

- > Addresses unmet needs for transportation disadvantaged populations
- ▶ Promotes transportation equity by providing transit that is comparable to driving in terms of time, convenience and cost
- Can be a more convenient and reliable option than traditional pre-scheduled demand response or infrequent fixed route services

Overview

Benefits

- ▶ More efficient and responsive service to rider demands with shorter wait times
- Provides transit to rural, low density, hilly or otherwise difficult to serve areas
- Does not require advance reservations
- > Flexible for serving late-shift workers and those with unpredictable schedules
- Generates robust data and insights on trip behavior
- Assists with providing paratransit services
- > Improves customer service experience through scheduling apps and payment technology

Potential Challenges

- lmplementing changes to transit agency staff and vehicle fleets
- Data gatekeeping by on-demand microtransit vendors
- Less control over cost increases
- ▶ More responsive service may require additional resources due to increased demand
- Equitable access for unbanked riders and those without mobile app access
- Rising costs of software vendor contracts

What has IMD learned from projects across the state and nationally?*

- > Plan for the increased ridership demand potentially resulting from an on-demand service that is more convenient and efficient.
- > Establish level of service metrics which may be different from those used for fixed-route or other demand-responsive services.
- Design a service that is equitable and accessible to diverse rider populations by operating a call center and accepting pre-paid debit cards.
- ▶ Include an option for pre-booking trips when designing the service.
- ▶ Identify a local maintenance provider to minimize vehicle downtime.
- > Provide flexible service that includes curb-to-curb service for non-ambulatory passengers and virtual stops for ambulatory riders.
- ▶ Identify priorities of service by balancing wait times with the size of the service zone and the number of vehicles.

How does on-demand microtransit support equity?

- > Reaches underserved communities not served by fixed route public transportation or communities with high prevalence of carless households
- ▶ Improves access to essential services, healthcare and employment opportunities, which improves quality of life
- > Provides more responsive service with shorter wait times and a higher level of service
- **Expands freedom** to riders to schedule their trips when they need them
- > Shortens walking and waiting times



^{*} Selected National Examples

Community Impact

"RIDE is a great thing for Wilson. More convenient because you can get to more destinations than the city bus all around town. I love it."

"The **service was as easy** as taking my own car really. It's always fun to share a ride with others and reduce my impact...If Micro extended to where I live, I would use it far more often."

"Microtransit is an **innovative model** to serve those in our
community who may not live or
work near a dedicated bus route."

Mobility for Everyone, Everywhere

The U.S. Department of Transportation through the Rural Surfaces Transportation Grant Program awarded NCDOT \$10.4 million for Mobility for Everyone, Everywhere in NC, or MEE NC.

The grant advances NCDOT's vision and strategy to partner with the state's rural transit systems to launch on-demand microtransit in 11 communities throughout the state. This program will accelerate the deployment of high-quality, on-demand transit services leading to more equitable mobility and improved access to opportunities, services, and resources from 2024 to 2026.

NCDOT will work with MEE NC communities on sustainable ways to continue on-demand service beyond the three-year grant window and engage with the public to evaluate the effectiveness of the service.

MEE NC Participating Communities

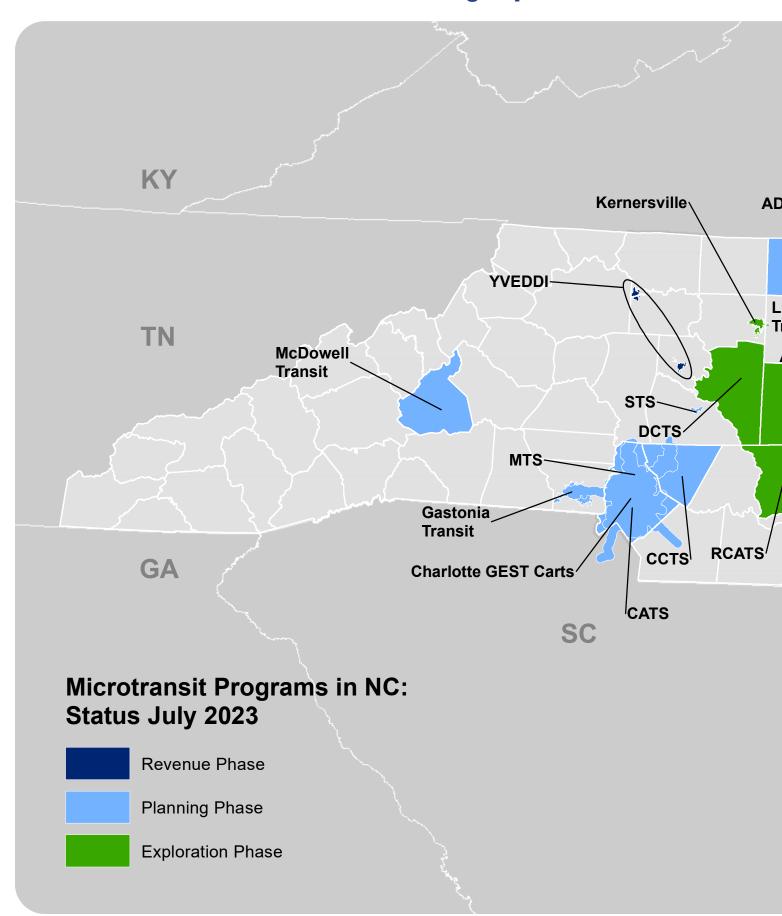


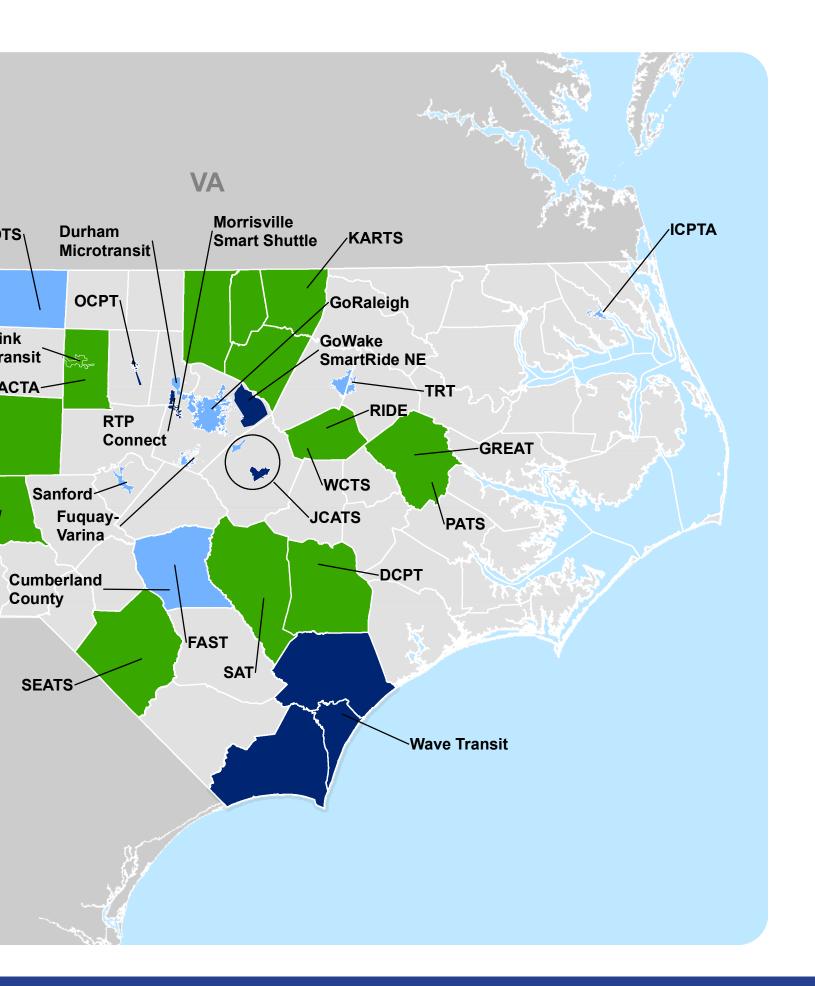






Where is on-demand microtransit being implemented?





Microtransit Service	Туре		w.i.i				
		Connection	Replacement	Low- Density	Temporal	Convenience	Vehicle Provider
Orange County Mobility On- Demand	SaaS				•		Orange County Public Transportation
RideMICRO (Wave Transit)	TaaS						Bus.com
RIDE (City of Wilson)	TaaS						Buggy
Morrisville Smart Shuttle	Blended	•		•			GoCary
GoWake SmartRide NE	Blended	•		•			MV Transportation
GoDurham Connect	TaaS						Lyft driver
RTP Connect (GoTriangle)	TaaS						Lyft and Uber driver
YVEDDI (Elkin and Mocksville Microtransit)	SaaS						YVEDDI
Charlotte GEST Carts	TaaS						GEST
Johnston QuickRIDE) (JCATS)	SaaS						JCATS

^{*} From Public Microtransit Pilots in the State of North Carolina: Operational Characteristics, Costs, and Lessons Learned, NCSU (see page 9 for more information)

Technology Provider	Driver Provider	Project Administration	Fleet Size	Pre- schedule availability	Wait Time	Funding Source
TransLoc	Orange County Public Transportation	Orange County Public Transportation	5	Not available	Within 15 minutes	Orange County Transit Plan (Sales tax, rental tax, vehicle registration fee)
Bus.com (Moovit)	Bus.com (Daniel's Tours)	City of Wilmington with Brunswick Transit System Inc and Pender County	5	Up to a week in advance	30 minute maximum	NCDOT ConCPT, Community Grant
Via	Via	City of Wilson	26	Not available	Within 15 minutes	FTA Section 5311, NCDOT ConCPT, Local funding
Via	GoCary	Town of Morrisville	2	Not available	Within 15 minutes	Town of Morrisville, Wake Transit Plan (Sales tax, rental tax, vehicle registration fee)
Uber	MV Transportation	Wake County Health and Human Services	3	Up to 14 days in advance	Within 30 minutes	Integrated Mobility Innovation grant, Wake County funds, Wake Transit Plan, GoWake
Lyft	Lyft	GoDurham	Dynamic	Extent of Lyft pre-scheduling availability	No wait time target set	Durham Transit Plan (Sales tax, rental tax, vehicle registration fee)
Lyft and Uber	Lyft and Uber	GoTriangle	Dynamic	Extent of Lyft and Uber pre- scheduling availability	No wait time target set	Research Triangle Foundation and GoTriangle General Funds
CTS Software	YVEDDI	YVEDDI	4 (2 per town)	Up to one day in advance	Within 15 minutes	FTA Section 5311, Rural Operating Assistance Program
GEST	GEST	GEST	10	Not available	No wait time target set	Paid sponsorships
CTS Software	JCATS	JCATS	5	Available	Variable, no wait time target set	Modivcare pilot, Local funding

Comparison to Other Transit Modes

The following table compares public on-demand microtransit services with private transportation network companies, demand response, and fixed-route transit service.

Service Element	Public On-Demand Microtransit	Demand Response	Fixed-Route	Transportation Network Companies
Curb to Curb Service				
Operates within defined service zone			N/A	
Trips may be shared with other riders				
Trips must be booked				
Reservations needed 24 hours in advance				
Booking options for riders without access to internet and/or banking			N/A	
Accessible vehicle mandated				